Fact Sheet No. 1

Ross Complex Superfund Site

APRIL 1990



Ross Complex Needs a Clean Up

After identifying hazardous wastes at the Ross Complex, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) listed the site on the National Priorities List (NPL). The Ross Complex is now a Superfund site.

In the next two and one-half years, experts will study the hazardous wastes, determine health risks to the community and plan how to clean up the site. BPA will be asking you and the community for ideas during the cleanup process. This fact sheet introduces you to the site, and past and future investigations.

Ross Has Evolved Into A Key Energy Site

Bonneville Power Adminstration (BPA) built its first large substation, named Ampere, in north Vancouver, Washington, to receive and distribute electricity from Bonneville Dam. The station was designed as the center of a system to transmit power in western Oregon and Washington. In 1939, officials renamed Ampere to Ross and since that time, the 200-acre complex has become a site of many activities.

The substation has been expanded several times. BPA has large maintenance facilities at Ross and stores all kinds of electrical equipment, tower parts and power poles. Engineers at the site work on many different research projects. Dittmer Control Center, the nerve center for the power system in the Northwest, is located there.

The complex is located on Highway 99 at the city limits of Vancouver, Washington. It is bordered by Burnt Bridge Creek and Cold Creek on the northern and southwestern portions of the site. The southeastern portion of the site borders residential property.

The Hazardous Waste Investigation Began in the Early 80's

In 1983 and 1984, the EPA asked federal agencies to look for possible hazardous wastes on federal lands and sites. In response, BPA began interviewing long time employees and reviewing historic records and photographs about pollution-causing activities at Ross.





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Through these interviews and review of BPA files, areas at Ross were found where hazardous materials were released into the environment. This preliminary assessment was completed in 1986. In 1987-88, a site inspection further confirmed the hazardous waste problem.

After examining the results of our studies, the EPA decided to place Ross on the NPL, making it a superfund site in 1989.

BPA Is Exploring The Extent Of The Problem

BPA, in collaboration with the EPA and Washington Department of Ecology is continuing site analysis with a view toward prompt site cleanup. In October 1989, BPA hired the Seattle-based environmental contracting firm of Dames & Moore to begin work on a plan for investigating hazardous substances at the Ross Complex. Following Superfund requirements Dames & Moore will perform a thorough study of the kinds of hazardous substances used at the Ross Complex, past handling practices, identification of contaminated areas, and the extent, if any, that the hazardous substances may have migrated from contaminated areas.

The investigation will culminate in a report detailing the Remedial Investigation (RI) of the entire Ross Complex, as well as plans to evaluate cleanup alternatives if cleanup is found to be necessary. The evaluation of cleanup alternatives is called a Feasibility Study (FS). In short, the purpose of the RI/FS is to evaluate the nature and extent of the environmental problems identified at the site and develop possible ways for remedying them.

The Full Investigation Will Take Two And A Half Years

The Superfund process for Ross should be finished by the end of 1993. Detailed testing will be done this summer. Samples will be taken from existing and new wells, soils will be further sampled and air will be tested for vapors and particulates. These tests will be carefully analyzed, compared with previous findings and used to determine the extent of the problem. Based on this analysis and public review, alternative methods of cleanup will be reviewed and a final plan of action developed. The extent of cleanup will depend on actions chosen in the plan. Initial findings from the Site Inspection are contained in Fact Sheet No. 3.

You Can Be Involved

Bonneville will be providing information about the Ross Complex as it emerges. Local residents and interested people are encouraged to participate in meetings, follow progress at the site and offer any information and suggestions they consider important.

A complete record of activities, findings, plans and comments will be maintained at the Dittmer Control Center and at the Vancouver Public Library, Main Office 1007 E. Mill Plain Boulevard, Vancouver, Washington 98603.

Fact sheets like this one will be available as the study and cleanup progress. The public will be asked for advice before cleanup decisions are made. You can get information about the site at any time during working hours by calling the facility manager listed below.

If you would like to be placed on a mailing list, share ideas or just learn more about this project, mail in the attached form or contact:

John Straub
Ross Facility Manager
Bonneville Power
Administration
P. O. Box 491
5411 NE Highway 99
Dittmer Control Center
Vancouver, WA 98666
(206) 690-2070

Other BPA Contacts

You may also contact BPA's Public Involvement office in Portland. Telephone numbers, voice/ TTY, for the Public Involvement office are: (503) 230-3478 in Portland; toll free (800) 452-8429 for Oregon outside of Portland; (800) 547-6048 for Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, and California. You may also send comments to Public Involvement Manager, Bonneville Power Administration, Post Office Box 12999, Portland, Oregon 97212

of hazardous waste at the Ross Com address on the mailing list.	
Name	
Organization	
Address	
City	State Zip
Phone ()	